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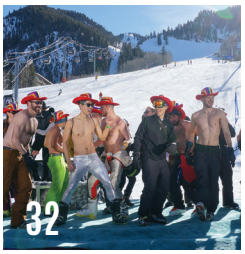

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ON THE COVER
Aspen and Utah offer up exciting Gay Ski Weeks for those who like to party it up during the winter. Photo by Matt Power

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FROM THE EDITOR | BY CHRIS TARBOX

Once Upon A Time In The North

It's that time. You know you can't escape it. You've steeled and prepared yourself for it, but, like always, it'll get the better of you.

Winter is coming.

Luckily, I can use that line since it's still technically en vogue with only one season of *Game of Thrones* left (do we *seriously* have to wait until April?!), but in the meantime, yes, winter is pretty much here and ready to kick our butts with all the snow and all the shoveling and all the frostbite and subzero temps and whatnot. Joy of joys!

But thankfully, thanks to our can-do, ya-you-betcha Minnesota spirit, the Twin Cities makes the most of the winter season with a plethora of awesome activities and diversions to keep the winter blues at bay. And that's what our 2018-19 Winter What To Do issue is for!

Warmly nestled within these pages are tons of terrific and fabulous events you can watch or participate in either the metro area or Greater Minnesota, from art sales and comedy shows to snowshoeing and kite festivals. On top of that, we travel out west to learn about the awesome gay ski weeks held in Aspen and Utah for those of you looking to party Rocky Mountain-style.

Furthermore, our pal Bradley Traynor profiles the plant-based eats of Fig + Farro of Uptown, and Carla Waldemar soaks in the Southern charm of Atlanta, Georgia in her latest travel piece.

So yeah, even though we gotta bust out the scarves, jackets, snow pants, boots, shovels, hand warmers and every knit cap we can find, we're gonna make the best of it. It's just how we Minnesotans do things. And besides: as bad as our winters are, at least we don't have to deal with White Walkers.

(Ugh, I mean seriously, we have to wait until April?) ▮

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A WORD IN EDGEWISE | BY E.B. BOATNER

Sardines and Silliness: Restorative, Not Restoration Drama

It's a world-wearying time. Shall we seek respite in theater? Not Lear or Loman, not sarcastic Coward or brittle Wilde. Something…*silly*. Through prescience or perchance, the Guthrie offers *Noises Off*.

Michael Frayn's 1982 gem introduces a group of British provincial actors thrashing through the dress rehearsal of *Nothing On*, a bedroom farce, about whose quality the set's garish green carpeting speaks volumes.

Act Two: On tour. We're backstage now, where the *Nothing On* cast must pantomime wayward props, missed cues, and personal vendettas and trysts accrued during the run; forced into silence as the play lumbers along out front. The breakneck pantomime is splendid, notably Sally Wingert's hefting an unwieldy axe that overbalances, pinwheeling her into a spectacular pratfall from which she uprights fluidly and carries on.

It takes meticulous timing and physical agility to look this effortless. Like Wingert, the entire cast lurches, slips, falls, and crashes seamlessly, wreaking chaos on order, then, on a dime, pulls order from shambles. The amazing grace of *Noises Off*, why I believe it's needed in these parlous times, is that it contains not a trace of malice or ugliness. Conflict, yes, this *is* theater, but no injury, no bitter aftertaste. Slapstick teeters on the brink of disaster, but like Wile E. Coyote and Road Runner tossing anvils and sticks of dynamite, these actors will emerge unscathed; housekeeper Mrs. Clackett will, like the rising sun, reappear in the next scene with or without her plate of sardines.

Counterpointing *Noises Off* with *Nothing On*, Frayn uses all eight actors and their characters to deliver a spot-on yet affectionate sendup of theater life; an actor demanding his "motivation" for carrying a box into another room, an ingénue that over-gesticulates and over-emotes, actors/actresses that forget or leaving props, and, specific to this drama, shoals of ripe, slippery sardines. The cast are archetypes, but not cutouts; Frayn's double action overlays caricature with a beating heart.

Act III: April, at the end of *Nothing On*'s run, the entire assemblage is unravelling; the actors are running on fumes, grasping for lines and props long gone. Huddling together they cry, "What do we do now?"

My own advice to the theater-goer: See *Noises Off*! Laugh 'til you're breathless and weepy: It'll do you a world of good. ∎

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A CHRISTMAS CAROL

Through Dec. 29
Guthrie Theater, 818 S. 2nd St., Minneapolis
612-377-2224
www.guthrietheater.org

Once again, Nathaniel Fuller reprises his acclaimed lead performance as the miserly Ebenezer Scrooge in the Guthrie Theater's annual production of Charles Dickens's *A Christmas Carol.* This stage adaptation by Crispin Whittell also features the superb Charity Jones, a master of classical theater, in 13 of the run's performances in a crossgender turn in the role.

Artistic director Joseph Haj says, "This play has one purpose, and that is to bring us joy by reminding us of our better selves. If even the misanthropic Ebenezer Scrooge can change so meaningfully and so completely for the better, perhaps there is hope for the rest of us. Even after more than four decades at the Guthrie, *A Christmas Carol's* message of hope still rings true."

A Christmas Carol. Photo by Dan Norman

BLACKBIRD

Dec. 13-Jan. 5
Grain Belt Warehouse, 77 13th Ave. NE, Studio 202
Minneapolis
612-401-4506
www.darkstormy.org

Michaela Johnson directs David Harrower's drama, *Blackbird*, for Dark and Stormy Productions. This intimate two hander features Sara Marsh and Luverne Seifert. Marsh, who is also Dark and Stormy's artistic director, is acutely aware of the play's controversial content and the controversial perspectives it relates. She says *Blackbird* has "been mischaracterized as a 'woman meeting her abuser 15 years later', but this play is far more nuanced than that. Some audience members may ultimately decide that's what this play is about, but it's possible that others might not see it quite the same way—there is a tremendous amount of ambiguity written into this play which will challenge the audience to think critically about these issues. What does consent truly look like? What does redemption look like? Can someone be held accountable for their actions but also become a productive contributing member of society? How do power and love each play into this equation?"

Blackbird. Photo by Megan Engeseth

GO BACK FOR MURDER

Through Dec. 16
Theatre in the Round Players, 245 Cedar Ave.
Minneapolis
612-333-3010
www.theatreintheround.org

Theatre in the Round is an old hand at producing the plays of that most popular female writer ever, Agatha Christie. This season they are presenting one of her lesser known dramas, *Go Back For Murder*. Director Lynn Musgrave tells us, "I did a little research prior to reading the script; it was originally a Hercule Poirot story called *Five Little Pigs/Murder in Retrospect*. When asked, late in her playwriting career, for a new stage production, the grand Dame adapted her story, replacing the eccentric Hercule—of whom, she said, she'd grown tired, with earnest young solicitor Justin Fogg (Grant Hooyer)."

"What struck me immediately upon reading the script (circa 1960-61) was how much more developed these characters are than most Christie characters. Carla (Claire Avery), our heroine, is on a quest to clear her mother's name as a murderess found guilty of poisoning her husband. Before 'going back' sixteen years, we're allowed to become well acquainted with Carla, her childhood trauma, and the characters from her mother's past who will both help and hinder her quest."

Musgrave adds "I've also been struck—it's pretty inescapable—by the very feminist (for the early '60s) stance taken by Dame Agatha in this story. This prolific lady playwright never took a sociopolitical stance; moreover, her canon rarely even mentioned the cataclysmic events taking place in Europe over the course of her writing career. Here, though, we're 'flashing back' to the days immediately following the end of WWII with an openly philandering artist as the murder victim. And we have two ladies—the eccentric governess and her charge—played by Annette Kurek and Gillian Mueller, central to the plot, who have 'no use for men.' My, Dame Agatha, how you've changed!"

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How The Grinch Stole Christmas. Photo by Dan Norman

DR. SEUSS'S HOW THE GRINCH STOLE CHRISTMAS

Through Jan. 6
Children's Theatre, 2400 3rd Ave., Minneapolis
612-874-0400
www.childrenstheatre.org

Reed Sigmund, one of the finest comic actors around, returns this year in the title of role of Dr. Seuss's miserly and miserable Grinch. Of course, there's a whole lot more beneath the character's spectacularly grumpy surface. Sigmund elaborates, "The Grinch carries a soul with such depth and richness that I never tire of exploring each and every nook and cranny of his complex personality. As I prepare to don the green fur once again, I giddily wonder what new discoveries I will make in this production."

MEASURE FOR MEASURE IN REPERTORY WITH WOMEN BEWARE WOMEN

Through Dec. 23
Gremlin Theatre, 550 Vandalia St., St. Paul
651-321-4024
www.classicalactorsensemble.org

Classical Actors Ensemble is presenting two major plays from the early 17th century English Renaissance, specifically the era of King James I, the period known as the Jacobean Era. *Measure for Measure* and *Women Beware Women* run in alternating performances at Gremlin Theatre with the same actors playing the different roles of the two plays.

William Shakespeare's *Measure for Measure* still stuns as a dark vision of arbitrary law enforcement by a corrupt power structure. When a judge played by Daniel Kristian Vopava takes control of Vienna, he pursues an agenda to shut down brothels and severely punish heterosexual fornication. The play expresses latent fears about a Puritan backlash against the English Crown. That backlash would finally manifest in the English Civil War starting in 1642.

Director Diane Mountford says, "When I tell people I'm directing *Measure for Measure*, everyone comments on how relevant the play is in our modern world. Which is true. But it also makes me want to scream. I could wish that the plot of *Measure for Measure* no longer worked; that the issues of power and legislated morality had worked themselves out to a more just equilibrium over the past 450 years. But the fact of the matter is that they haven't. So until they do, we need to keep looking at these issues and working to do better. And *Measure for Measure* is a very good lens through which to focus."

In *Women Beware Women*, playwright Thomas Middleton created one of literature's most diabolical female characters, Livia. Samantha V. Papke plays the role for CAI. This Livia is not to be confused with another one – the actual historical Livia, diabolical wife of Roman Emperor Augustus. Though it's difficult not to make the comparison. In Middleton's play she arranges down low relationships between men and women, which puts the women in peril. And the men as well, for that matter. The Jacobean Tragedy genre is renowned for its evocations of vengeance and this play most definitely delivers that in the bloodiest way.

Joseph Papke directed a marvelous CAI production earlier this year of *The Roaring Girl* which Middleton co-wrote with Thomas Dekker. Therefore, his direction of this revenge tragedy is eagerly awaited. Papke says, "While its somewhat cryptic title lends itself to interpretative debate, our production focuses on how a strongly patriarchal society limits women's options and agency, and what surprising choices for survival, and perhaps even happiness, can result."

TRIPLE ESPRESSO – A HIGHLY CAFFEINATED COMEDY

Through Jan. 13
Park Square Theatre's Andy Boss Stage, 20 W. 7th Pl., St. Paul
651-291-7005
www.parksquaretheatre.org

Three zany performers—a musician, an illusionist, and a comic—wax woefully about a showbiz break gone bad on a major television show. Their names are as madcap as their antics: Hugh Butternut, Buzz Maxwell, and Bobby Bean. *Triple Espresso* creates a contemporary version of the vaudeville tradition in a sketch-driven production that has played almost continually for 22 years. It originated in Minneapolis where it ran until 2008 and would go on to become the longest running show in San Diego. *Triple Espresso* has also played abroad. It even includes shadow puppets! ∎

Triple Espresso. Photo by Anna Eveslage

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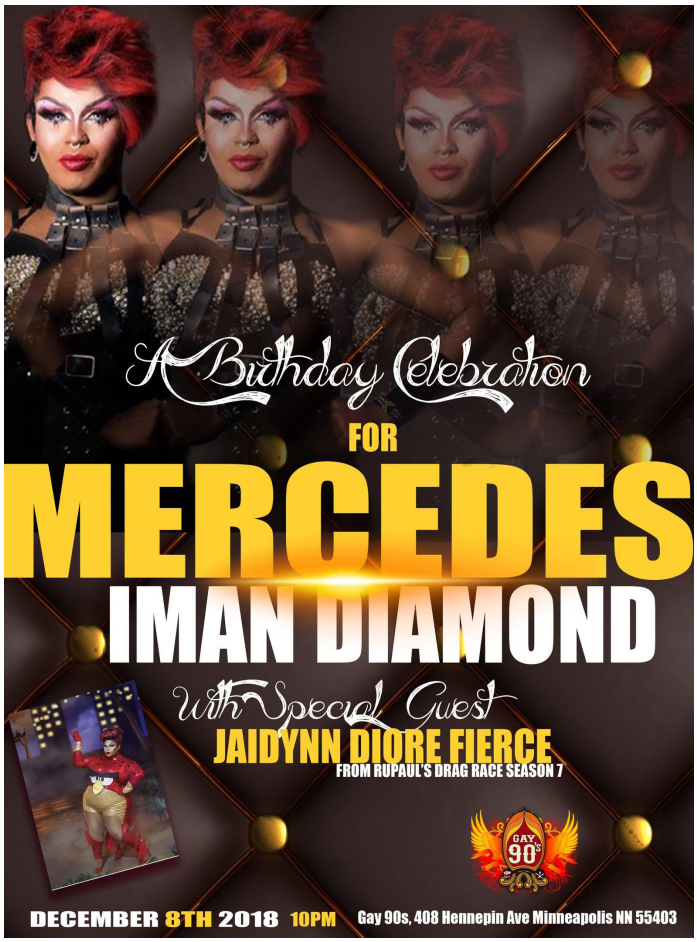

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EAT THE MENU | BY BRADLEY TRAYNOR | PHOTOS BY MIKE HNIDA

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It's not every day you can get me into a restaurant that doesn't serve meat. Even fewer are the days you'd get me into such an establishment and like, nay, love it. Such was one such day a few weeks back when I had the chance to explore the exotic (for me) cuisine of Uptown's very own vegan wonderland, Fig + Farro. Like many first-time vegan diners, I went into Fig + Farro wondering if I would leave full. I needn't have worried. And neither should you, dear likely fellow meat eater.

The menu is laid out like most: an assortment of small plates, large plates and sides with a variety of cultural and culinary influences that guarantee options for most any taste.

Our sumptuous saunter down the menu began with a hefty but delicate falafel. Nestled atop arugula and dotted with tart pomegranate seeds, these crispy orbs are made of hearty yellow peas instead of their more traditional chickpea cousins. A substantial first bite.

The fried cauliflower came out next and, while it is considered a side dish, it makes the perfect appetizer. A true table favorite, these crunchy breaded veggie bites are dusted with za'atar and kissed with a creamy preserved citrus tahini.

When it comes to large plates and the entree end of things, there are some truly surprising works of edible magic on the menu.

If you told me it was possible to create an amazing barbacoa out of… wait for it… jackfruit, I'd most certainly laugh. In fact, I did laugh. On the inside, that is, when I saw it on the menu. Like much of my experience at Fig + Farro, I was more than pleasantly surprised. I have a hard time believing, in fact, anyone would notice the meat in this dish isn't actually meat. Much less fruit. Piled in all its unctuous glory atop roasted sweet potato, bedazzled with pinto beans, avocado and salsa, this hearty barbacoa was passed around the table wildly. The only thing more surprising than the fruity origins of this dish was the I-can't-believe-it's-not-dairy cashew crema that topped it off.

Continued on page 18

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Fig + Farro offers up a cozy environment to complement its healthy menu options.

Yellow pea falafel and fried cauliflower are some of the sumptuous dishes you can have at Fig + Farro.

The other entree I can't stop thinking about is the smoked wild mushroom ravioli. Talk about the comfiest of comfort foods. Equally surprising as the barbacoa in its ability to taste like something completely opposite your expectations, this ravioli is veritable voodoo. As in, the ravioli isn't actually ravioli. The traditional pasta is actually thinly sliced celeriac root. Not that you'll notice.

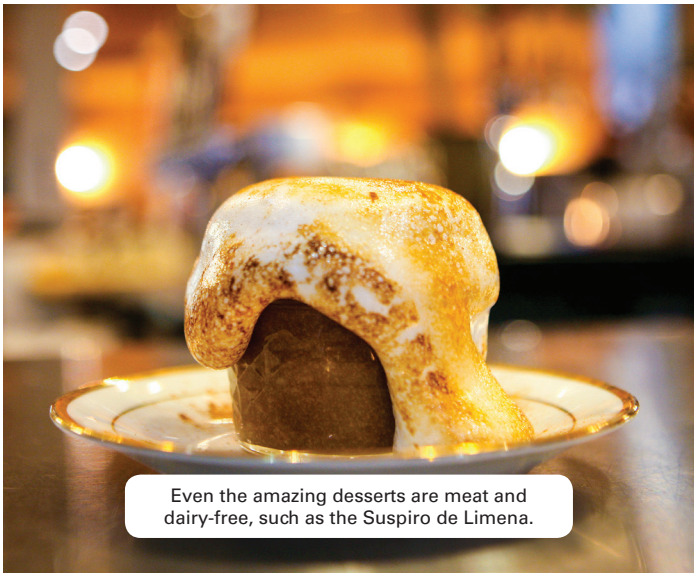
Before your brain has time to work out the math on how slices of vegetable can taste like pasta, it will be slammed with the rich and decadent smoked mushroom and cashew cheese filling. I could've easily ordered seconds. I should've ordered seconds.

By now you know the word "vegan" is no cause for appetite alarm. Pleased you'll be to learn that desserts at Fig + Farro are equally surprising and satisfying.

The caramel Tosca cake is the pastry equivalent of a warm, lingering hug. Moist and dense vanilla sponge is festooned with crispy, sweet caramelized almonds. A scoop of locally made vanilla MN Nice Cream accompanies an apple compote that, combined, makes for a happy mouthful. The Suspira de Limeña is a unique and wonderful addition to the dessert menu. This molten cup of creamy, rich (oh, BTW, totally dairy-free) dulce de leche is topped with a gooey blanket of toasted meringue. If the almond cake was a hug, this is an extended make out session. Pair it with a coffee or boozy latte and you're golden.

While I'm still likely to seek out meat forward dining experiences, Fig + Farro has taught me I don't need to. Nor will I walk into a vegan experience henceforth and assume I won't leave satisfied. If Chef Charlie Baez continues his culinary magic, satisfaction is all but guaranteed. ∎

Plant-based pasta? The Smoked Wild Mushroom Ravioli has you covered.



Even the amazing desserts are meat and dairy-free, such as the Suspiro de Limena.

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TRAVEL | BY CARLA WALDEMAR | PHOTOS BY CARLA WALDEMAR

The tomb of civil rights icon The Rev. Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr. is located at Atlanta's Martin Luther King Jr. National Historic Site.

Why Atlanta?

All I knew about Atlanta was that scene in *Gone with the Wind* where Gen. Sherman burns the city to a crisp. Oh, and chasing a connecting flight through its airport—the busiest in the world. So… why visit?

Well, there's that little event called the Super Bowl, to be hosted here in February. In a preview peek at the city, I shed my disdain for a skyline of All Things Tall and Shiny which arose after that historic blaze and explored life on the ground around them, starting with downtown's Centennial Olympic Park. It boasts five must-see attractions, starting with Georgia Aquarium—largest on the continent—which puts visitors up-close and personal with scary sharks, Beluga whales the size of blimps, dolphins graceful as ballerinas, dopey, strutting penguins, man-size sea otters massaging their scalps, and manta rays that look like Batmobiles.

The Antebellum mansions retain their pre-Civil War glory in small towns surrounding Atlanta.

Proceed to the World of Coca Cola to enjoy free samples as you gawk at the vault that allegedly contains The Secret Recipe; a theater showcasing commercials worldwide; accessories fashioned from crushed cans; and the gift shop of a lifetime. In Chick-fil-A College Football Hall of Fame, your badge calls up the Minnesota scene. Interactively, follow your team onto the field. Recruit players, weighing skill against travel and bonus expenses. ("Oh no," my screen scolded. "You're way over budget.") As an "announcer", record the play-by-plays. Kick an actual field goal, throw (hopefully) a touchdown, catch a pass. Then pass on to tour CNN's headquarters, where you're greeted by a reminder that "Facts are facts. They are indisputable." Listening, Washington?

The last site is the most somber. It's the Center for Civil and Human Rights, in this city that birthed the movement, leading off with segregationists' quotes. Proceed through historic events, from braver-than-brave Freedom Riders and kids pioneering school integration, to resistance training ("No one goes out alone" edicts plus positions to take to survive a beating). Experience lunch counter sit-ins, where you're invited, if you dare, to don headphones spouting obscene diatribes.

Continue the story on Sweet Auburn Avenue, home of the city's black middle class, where the Martin Luther King Jr. National Historic Site recounts the life of the peaceful resistance leader. Across the street stands Ebenezer Baptist Church, where you can hear him preach (via a recording) and where his mother was later shot dead while playing the organ. Visit his boyhood home and tomb.

Continued on page 22

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The World of Coca-Cola Museum is located in Atlanta's Olympic Park, featuring the vault holding the soda giant's secret recipe.

Another peace-loving man from Georgia became president—Jimmy Carter. His library here depicts his rise from peanut farmer to governor, then president, and his talent for getting enemies like Israel and Egypt to negotiate and solving the Iran hostage crisis.

The famous fried chicken at Matthew's Cafeteria is widely considered to be the best in Georgia.

Underneath this polished surface, a beguilingly quirky underbelly emerges—even at the venerated High Museum of Art, where a collection of Folk and Outsider Art alone is worth the trip. Bonus: its photo gallery starring outsiders Diane Arbus and Cindy Sherman.

Continue by walking or biking the new, three-mile Eastside Trail, where you'll spot scads of cheeky murals. Near it, check out the ultra-gay-friendly Clermont Hotel, newly remodeled in wink-wink Fifties fashion. Attached is a popular club featuring strippers nearing retirement age. The hotel's rooftop pool and bar overlook vibrant Ponce City Market, an anchor of Midtown's boys' town. Pride Festival, one of the largest and oldest in the land, takes place in October.

Atlanta's surrounding county hosts DeKalb County's Farmers Market, an alias for a covered marketplace roughly the size of the Pentagon, featuring spices from sumac to mango powder, twelve kinds of squash and two aisles devoted to potatoes. The market roasts its own coffee, makes its own sausage, pasta and bagels, and offers a cafeteria for people-watching.

More eats at Matthews Cafeteria, in Tucker, whose third-generation owner proclaims, "Welcome to the New South. But *our* change is *not* to change—not hopping on a trend." Thus, it's famous for the hands-down best fried chicken in the county. Here's the recipe, unchanged since 1955: bird, flour, salt and pepper, fried at 326 degrees ("not 325, not 327"). The Food Terminal, in a Chamblee strip mall, conjures the street-food scene of East Asia in a menu thick as a magazine. It's high on *Atlanta Magazine*'s "best new restaurants" list.

Atlanta gave birth to the Waffle House chain, so it's only fitting that the original site of 1955 serves as a museum. Across the street rises Odd's End, a sorta-antiques shop where you can snag a ventriloquist's Charlie McCarthy puppet, false teeth, a billy club, and a stuffed frog.

Enticed? For more info, visit www.atlanta.net. ▮

UPPING THE ANTE (BELLUM)

Not all Georgia towns were scorched by Sherman. In neighboring Milledgeville, the Civil War general torched venues of commerce but spared the graceful antebellum mansions of the city, which once served as Georgia's capital. (Centuries earlier, Spanish explorer DeSoto also passed through on his search for gold.)

A trolley tour through the Historic District stops for visitors to tour several antebellum sites, starting at Rose Hill, a white-columned Greek Revival home of 1852. Then venture into the Old State Capitol to visit the House of Representatives Chamber, where Georgia seceded from the Union. Explore Brown-Stetson-Sanford House, built in 1825 as a hotel; southern author Flannery O'Connor was a fan. Then explore the Old Governor's Mansion, occupied by Sherman during his march to the sea.

Andalusia, a cotton plantation where O'Connor lived in a bristly relationship with her mother while managing the farm's precarious operations, is shrine to both her writing and her outsider status. It's punctuated by her collection of All Things Peacock (including 40 birds, some of which remain). After earning three college degrees in three years while working as a political cartoonist, she died at 39, leaving her claim as her greatest accomplishment: at age six, teaching chickens to walk backward.

More authors called nearby Eatonton home—in fact, the tiny town is site of the Georgia Writers Museum, which honors, among others, its top three: O'Connor, Alice Walker (*The Color Purple*), who will return to celebrate her 75th birthday in July 2019, and Joel Chandler Harris, author of the folksy Uncle Remus stories, gleaned during this white man's childhood listening to black caretakers' tales about B'rer Rabbit, B'rer Fox and other tricksters. They're brought to life in the Joel Chandler Harris Museum, housed in former slaves' quarters.

Eatonton also hosts Plaza Arts Center in a former schoolhouse now serving as an historical museum, tracing from earlier Creek Indian beginnings to the reign of King Cotton and black sharecroppers. "Hard Times" poses an impactful photo history of the Great Depression. Because Sherman once again spared the town's mansions, the lovely Habard House was recently reclaimed as an enchanting B&B.

Madison gleams with more stately mansions spared from Sharman's torch. Today its Historic District boasts over 50 antebellum homes (self-tour app available), leading off with Heritage Hall, erected in 1811 by a fellow who became the town's doctor after completing one year of medical school (which gives new meaning to the phrase "practicing medicine"). Madison-Morgan Cultural Center, built in 1895 as a grade school, now lends its stunning auditorium for cultural events. It hosts an art gallery and restored schoolroom, too.

At the edge of town, pull over for the ultimate farm-to-table experience at Farmview Market. In addition to locally-sourced groceries, it boasts its own grist mill (think grits!) and sausage-making facility for over 50 varieties, ranging from chocolate chili to Philly cheese. Rush to the bakery counter to indulge in classic Southern wonders like pecan pie (not pe-CON; it's PEE-can, remember), coconut cake, banana pudding and Coca-Cola cake. For breakfast in its café? Chicken with biscuits and gravy, if y'all know what's good for you.

For more inspiration, check out www.georgia.org. ▮

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2018-19 WINTER WHAT TO DO GUIDE

By Kassidy Tarala

As the darkness falls upon us, it's easy to choose hibernation as the coping mechanism of choice to avoid the dreadful, icy, bone-chilling winter season. But as much as we might want to curl up under fifty blankets in bed for the next five months, we unfortunately do have to leave our cozy abodes. Thankfully, the Twin Cities make it pretty easy to do that. Try some (or all) of the fun winter activities from this year's Winter What To Do Guide.

WELLS FARGO WINTER SKATE

Landmark Center, St. Paul
Through Feb. 3
$4 skate rental
www.visitsaintpaul.com

We can't beat winter, so why not join it? Throw on a parka, a hat, and a pair (or two) of gloves and embrace the chilly winter weather at Wells Fargo WinterSkate this season. Skate circles in the heart of St. Paul, enjoy the holiday music, or stroll through the park to look at the seasonal lights. Free skating lessons are also offered.

TWIN CITIES WINTER FARMERS MARKET

Minneapolis and St. Paul
Through April 20
www.mplsfarmersmarket.com
www.stpaulfarmersmarket.com

Farmers Markets are typically regarded as a spring or summer activity, but not in the Bold North! Come to one of the Twin Cities Winter Farmers Markets for some seasonal treats, homemade crafts, hot beverages, and more. Dates, times, and locations can be found online.

GIFTS IN THE GALLERY

Bloomington Center for the Arts, Bloomington
Dec. 5 to 19
artistrymn.org

Looking to get some holiday shopping done? Look no further. Stop by the two-week boutique Gifts in the Gallery for unique, stunning items for everyone on your list. From silk scarves and jewelry to ceramics and blown glass, all items are handcrafted by more than 60 local artists.

RAGING ART ON

Gamut Gallery, Minneapolis
Dec. 6-8, 13-15, 20-22
www.gamutgallerympls.com

Escape the frigid temperatures and embrace your creative side at the annual Raging Art On gallery event at the Elliot Park-based Gamut Gallery. With more than 50 artists, RAO offers a variety of paintings, photos, prints, jewelry, collectibles, handmade apparel, and housewares for every style.

GIFTS IN THE GALLERY
Photo by Rachel Daly

RAGING ART ON
Photo courtesy of Gamut Gallery

HOLIDAY IN THE HEARTLAND

Dakota Jazz Club, Minneapolis
Dec. 8-9
$35 general admission, $150 VIP
www.oneheartland.org

Nothing will quite warm you up during a Minnesota winter like jazz music. Come to the Dakota Jazz Club for the Holiday in the Heartland event. With musical guests, silent live auctions, and a presentation of the annual One Heartland Heart of Hope Award, this event will make you forget all about the frigid outdoors.

WHITNEY HOUSTON'S CHRISTMAS DRAG BRUNCH

Union Rooftop, Minneapolis
Dec. 8-9
$11
www.facebook.com/flipphone

Do you want to dance with somebody? Join in the fun at the Union Rooftop for the Whitney Houston Christmas drag brunch. Sing along, dance your heart out, or gorge yourself on entrees and cocktails. No matter what, you'll be sure to get "so emotional."

BEST OF 2018 DRAG BRUNCH

LUSH, Minneapolis
Dec. 9
$22
www.lushmpls.com

Loved the Whitney Houston Christmas drag brunch? Why stop there? Come to LUSH for the Best of 2018 Drag Brunch. The year might be coming to an end, but the fun doesn't have to.

TWIN CITIES PRIME TIMERS BOOK CLUB

Quatrefoil Library, Minneapolis
Dec. 15, Jan. 19, Feb. 16
www.qlibrary.org

Get your read on with the Twin Cities Prime Timers Book Club, a social organization for older gay and bisexual men. With a new book each month, this book club will give you something to do this winter and some great books to read while doing it. The December book will be *Breaking the Surface* by Greg Louganis.

ITASCA STATE PARK WINTER BIRD COUNT

Itasca State Park, Park Rapids
Dec. 17
www.dnr.state.mn.us

Join fellow nature lovers at the 23rd annual Itasca State Park Winter Bird Count. Part of the nationwide Audubon Christmas Bird Count, this event is great for anyone who wants to learn more about native birds, take in the views, or face the frozen tundra head-on.

A MUPPET CHRISTMAS CAROL DRAG BRUNCH

Union Rooftop, Minneapolis
Dec. 22
$11
www.facebook.com/flipphone

This is certainly not your typical drag brunch. Celebrate the holiday season with brunch, a drag show, and, er, Muppets? Sing along to carols and chow down on your favorite brunch, Muppet-style.

Continued on page 26

POLAR PLUNGE.
Photo by Aaron Huff

WINTER CARNIVAL
Photo courtesy of Saint Paul Winter Carnival

SPICE UP YOUR NEW YEAR'S: A SPICE GIRLS NEW YEAR'S DANCE PARTY

Amsterdam Bar and Hall, St. Paul
Dec. 31
$15
www.facebook.com/flipphone

I know what you want, what you really, really want: to attend the Spice Girls New Year's Dance Party, of course! Dress up as your spirit-Spice, jam out to your favorite throwback tunes, and enjoy a trip down memory lane as you welcome 2019.

TRANSMISSION PRESENTS '80S PROM

First Avenue, Minneapolis
Dec. 31
$10 to $20
first-avenue.com

If there's one thing we don't want to ever relive it's '80s style… which is exactly why we're doing it. Come to First Avenue on New Year's Eve for '80s Prom, a night filled with throwback jams, wild colors, and, of course, gigantic hairstyles.

STAR WARS IN CONCERT

Minnesota Orchestra, Minneapolis
Jan. 3-6
$51 to $99
www.minnesotaorchestra.org

Take a trip to another galaxy far, far away at *Star Wars in Concert* at the Minnesota Orchestra. View the original *Star Wars* film while taking in the classic John Williams melodies played live by the Minnesota Orchestra.

POLAR PLUNGE

Various Minnesota locations
Jan. 18-March 16
Minimum $75 donation
www.plungemn.org

Jumping into freezing cold water in the arctic tundra we call Minnesota? Okay, so we found an event I won't be going to. But if you're braver than I am, this is definitely an event you'll want to check out. The Polar Plunge is an annual icy dip that raises money for Special Olympics.

CANDLELIGHT SKI AND SNOWSHOE

Lake Bronson State Park, Lake Bronson
Jan. 19
www.dnr.state.mn.us

This is a winter event unlike any other. Enjoy some nighttime cross country skiing or snowshoeing—or both—in the candlelight. Perfect for a romantic date or a night of fun with the whole family. Refreshments will be available.

PINE CITY WINTER FROLIC

Snake River Fur Post, Pine City, MN
Jan. 19
$8 to $12.50
www.mnhs.org/furpost

Get outside at the Pine City Winter Frolic. With snowshoeing, throwing curling stones, playing a round of Ojibwe snow snake, and learning about winter travel during the fur trade, this event is great for the whole family and a learning lesson for all.

U.S. POND HOCKEY CHAMPIONSHIP

Lake Nokomis, Minneapolis
Jan. 24-27
www.uspondhockey.com

The game is on in the Home of Hockey! Whether you've registered yourself, know a friend or family member on the ice, or you just like cheering from the crowd, this is the perfect event to celebrate Minnesota culture. Just don't forget the blankets!

ST. PAUL WINTER CARNIVAL

St. Paul
Jan. 24-Feb. 3
Various prices
www.wintercarnival.com

Okay, fine! I'll admit it! Winter isn't all that bad. Especially at the St. Paul Winter Carnival. Puzzle contests, parades, ice palaces and more… what's not to love? Bring the whole family for a carnival unlike any other.

WINTERFEST

St. Paul Union Depot, St. Paul, MN
Jan. 25
www.mncraftbrew.org/event/winterfest

Eat (and drink) your way through winter at St. Paul's WinterFest. More than 20 restaurants have partnered with Minnesota's craft breweries to offer a wide variety of delicious brews and bites.

MINNEAPOLIS HOME + REMODELING SHOW

U.S. Bank Stadium, Minneapolis
Jan. 25-27
$4 to $12
minneapolishomeandremodelingshow.com

Itching to renovate your homes and want some primo tips? Then head on down to the third annual Minneapolis Home + Remodeling Show at U.S. Bank Stadium! More than 300 vendors will be on-site to offer resources on home remodeling, interior design, and much more. Special guests will include *This Old House* host Kevin O'Connor and HGTV star Jeff Devlin.

TWINSFEST 2019

Target Field, Minneapolis
Jan. 25-27
$10 to $20
www.mlb.com

Are you a Twins superfan? Or perhaps you just enjoy the atmosphere of a baseball game? Whatever the reason, TwinsFest 2019 is an event you'll want to check out. For just $20 for adults and $10 for children up to 12 years old, you can explore the beautiful Target Field, learn about the history of Twins baseball, and get a behind-the-scenes fan experience with interactive events and more.

Continued on page 28

WINTERFEST
Photo courtesy of Minnesota Craft Brewers Guild

MINNEAPOLIS HOME + REMODELING SHOW
Photo courtesy of Marketplace Events

LAKE HARRIET WINTER KITE FESTIVAL
Photo courtesy of Minneapolis Park and Recreation Board

IMPERIAL COURT CORONATION XXVII
Photo by Ron Comstock

2018-19
WINTER
WHAT TO DO GUIDE

IMPERIAL COURT CORONATION XXVII

The Saloon, Crowne Plaza, Minneapolis
Jan. 31-Feb. 3
$20 to $100
impcourtmn.com/coronation.html

We hereby dub thee royalty! Join Anastacia Rose and Kendra Blake at the Coronation XXVII "Once Upon a Dream: A Night of Faeries, Gems, and Hexes." Everyone's royalty at The Saloon.

Continued on page 30

Ron Comstock
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Season's Greetings and a Happy New Year From All Of Us At

WISHES AND MORE WINTER BALL
Photo by Thayur Photography

TREVOR NOAH
Photo courtesy of Xcel Energy Center

LAKE SUPERIOR ICE FESTIVAL

Barkers Island, Superior, WI
Jan. 25-27
www.lakesuperioricefestival.com

Hockey, fireworks, ice sculptures, and s'mores? Where do I sign up? Take in the beautiful North Shore in Superior, WI at the Lake Superior Ice Festival. With a Kids' Zone, ice racing, and snow slides, this festival has something for people of all ages.

LAKE HARRIET WINTER KITE FESTIVAL

Lake Harriet, Minneapolis
Jan. 26
www.minneapolisparks.org

Let's go fly a kite! Come to the 18th annual Lake Harriet Winter Kite Festival to view kites of all shapes, sizes, and colors soar high above the frozen lake. New this year, fat bike rides through the snow.

TREVOR NOAH: LOUD AND CLEAR TOUR

Xcel Energy Center, St. Paul
Feb. 9
$36 to $295
www.xcelenergycenter.com

Get ready to laugh at Trevor Noah's Loud and Clear Tour at the Xcel Energy Center. Known for hosting *The Daily Show* and authoring *Born a Crime: Stories from a South African Childhood*, Noah will share some social and political commentary and, of course, comedy.

STEM FAMILY DAY

Mill City Museum, Minneapolis
Feb. 16
$6 to $12
www.mnhs.org

Explore the diverse world of STEM at the STEM Family Day event at Mill City Museum. Learn about kitchen chemistry, waterpower in the City of Minneapolis, the history of milling and engineering in the Twin Cities, and much more.

FUR FLEE 12

Barker's Island Inn, Superior, WI
Feb. 28-March 3
$75 to $95, $110 at the door
www.ncbears.com

Join the North Country Bears at the Barker's Island Inn in Superior, WI for the annual Fur Flee event. Buy tickets ahead of time or at the door and get your grizzly freak on.

2019 WISHES AND MORE WINTER BALL

Marriott City Center, Minneapolis
March 2
$50 to $225
wishesandmore.org

Watch your favorite fairytale come to life at the annual Wishes and More Winter Ball. With an auction, games, dining and cocktails, dancing, and a Wishes and More Chapter presentation, this winter ball will surely make the kid in all of us smile.

BOCK FEST 2019

August Schell Brewing Company, New Ulm
March 2
$10
www.schellsbrewery.com

Escape the winter air at the annual Bock Fest at August Schell Brewing Company. Enjoy a variety of beer, sit by the fire, and learn about the rich history of August Schell Brewing Company.

MINNESOTA ROLLERGIRLS SEASON 15 HOME TEAM CHAMPIONSHIPS

Roy Wilkins Auditorium, St. Paul
March 30
$15 to $19
www.mnrollergirls.com

One of the most intense sporting events of the year, the Minnesota Rollergirls Season 15 Home Team Championships will earn one team the Golden Skate… and bragging rights, of course. Also, you'll want to get there early. The first 200 people in the doors get a free Minnesota Rollergirls t-shirt. ▮

HITTING THE RAINBOW SLOPES

ELEVATION GAY SKI WEEK AND ASPEN GAY SKI WEEK DRAW GLBT SKIERS TO ASPEN, COLORADO AND PARK CITY, UTAH SLOPES.

By Kassidy Tarala

"Gay parties are the best parties," Elevation Gay Ski Week producer Tom Whitman says with a wink. And that's exactly what draws in GLBT skiers every year to the annual gay ski weeks in Park City, Utah and Aspen, Colorado.

Whitman started producing gay ski week for Elevation, based in Mammoth Lakes, California before drawing in Park City. After 17 years in Mammoth Lakes and eight years in Park City, Whitman says gay ski week is heading to Tremblant, Quebec for the first time this year.

"Elevation started in Mammoth, as a bit of a lark. I started skiing when I was five, and then I raced on the UCLA ski team when I was an undergraduate. I wanted to combine my love of event production and big gay spectacle events with my love of snow sports," Whitman says. "The first year was a test, and I sent an email out to my friends, and about 200 people showed up. I knew that I was onto something fun."

Elevation previously hosted its awesome gay ski weeks in Mammoth Lakes, CA. Photo by Devin Mitchell

And he was.

Today, Gay Ski Week offers après-ski and nighttime events every day of the week. In addition to the extremely popular skiing and snowboarding options, Whitman says they also offer snowmobiling, spa, shopping, great food, and much more.

"Park City has some of the best restaurants of any ski town, from upscale to budget-friendly. And the same thing with lodging. You can go luxury with Main & SKY or Washington Schoolhouse, or you can stay with a lot of our Elevation attendees at our midrange host hotels the Peaks Hotel or the Yarrow," Whitman says.

If you're interested in getting in on some gay skiing action but are working with a smaller budget, Whitman says there are also options for you.

"There are great options for places to stay

Elevation Gay Ski Week has been a popular destination in Park City, UT for eight years. Photo by Miguel Mendoza

The Aspen Gay Ski Week also serves as a fundraiser for AspenOUT, a nonprofit organization in Aspen's Roaring Fork Valley. Photo by Matt Power

and places to eat and explore for all budget ranges in Park City, as well as at our other gay ski weeks in Mammoth and Tremblant," he says. "Skiing and snowboarding does cost some money, but you don't have to break the bank."

In addition to affordable options, Whitman says gay ski week isn't just for the novice, either. If you're a beginner, an expert, or anywhere in between, there will be something for you at gay ski week.

"The LGBTQ community is becoming more visible, and more resorts and communities are open and welcoming to the LGBTQ community. As a community, we are maturing to want other options beyond just bars and nightclubs," he says. "We want to bring our interests together and meet like-minded people, while also being in a gay setting."

Continued on page 33

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Aspen Gay Ski Week is an annual celebration for skiers and non-skiers alike. Photo by Matt Power

Park City isn't your scene? No problem. Aspen Gay Ski Week offers one of the liveliest, most unique ski experiences in Colorado.

"Our gay ski week is unique, as it's a fundraiser for AspenOUT, a nonprofit organization in Aspen's Roaring Fork Valley. Each year AspenOUT awards numerous organizations with grants and college students with scholarships," says Jim Guttau of Aspen Gay Ski Week. "This is an exciting week that supports LGBT initiatives nationwide. In addition, since we are the oldest, the city of Aspen is one of the most welcoming cities to the LGBT community, which can be seen by the rainbow flags hung all over the city. The warmth of the locals is what first made an impression on me in my first year."

While Colorado is known for its avid skiers, Guttau says gay ski week is for everyone. Yes, even you non-skiers.

"The most frequent comment I hear when people are considering attending Aspen Gay Ski Week is 'I don't ski,' to which I say, 'Many of the attendees don't even ski!' You can snowshoe to Pinecreek Cookhouse, one of my favorite winter activities, or on many of the trails around Aspen," Guttau says.

Additionally, there is plentiful shopping in many boutiques and art galleries, as well as first-class eateries that offer samplings. Guttau says ice skating, snowmobiling, and go dog-sledding are other popular options to enjoy the mountain scenery without the skis.

Like Park City, Aspen has affordable options for those on a smaller budget. Guttau says some guests just attend the free nightly après-ski parties at the Limelight Hotel, but he also suggests buying the official pass, as it gets you into all of the nightly events. The biggest tip: do not delay in purchasing these, as the passes usually sell out, as well as individual tickets, he warns.

Whether you're a skiing guru, a bunny hill beginner, or just a member of the GLBT community looking for a fun, outdoorsy way to connect with others, Elevation and Aspen gay ski weeks will surely give you a party unlike any other.

For tickets, dates, and other information about Elevation Gay Ski Week, visit utahgayskiweek.com. Visit gayskiweek.com for Aspen Gay Ski Week. ▮

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After living in a neighborhood in St. Paul's east side, Right at Home owner and CEO Paul Blom and his husband quickly became known as the "neighborhood boys" who were always around to help senior family members and neighbors.

"As our neighbors aged, we realized that we didn't have enough time to provide them with enough help, and we struggled to help them find services to help them remain in their homes," Blom says. "Some ended up moving to facilities, and we decided that some day we would do something along those lines."

Fast forward to 2000. Blom said his IT company was laying off several employees, and he knew he needed to make a change. He says that's when they found the Right at Home franchise, which is based out of Omaha, and they purchased the Twin Cities franchise.

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Right at Home offers seniors non-medical care and assistance, specifically for those over 60 years old. From companionship and socialization to homemaking and personal care, Right at Home provides seniors the comfort and support they need but often don't receive properly. Services include a variety of tasks including laundry, meal prep, transportation, and help with bathing, dressing, and hair.

"Our services are broadly affordable for our private pay clients. They don't blink an eye when quoted the prices. Some of them have help because of long-term care insurance policies that they previously purchased," Blom says. "If we talk with people for whom our cost is not affordable, we are very good at coming up with other resources to help pay for them. For example, Veterans Administration, Parkinson's Foundation, MS Society, or county social services."

Most Right at Home service recipients prefer to live in their own homes and apartments, but Blom says their services make it easy and convenient to do that.

"Another benefit would be that we are flexible as much as we can be with hours and days of service and many times go with what makes the most sense if problems arise," he says. "If there are issues, I would say we generally do the right thing, whatever that is, in each situation."

Looking for assisted living services for loved ones can be a difficult process, especially when there are so many options and so much information to consider. Blom says he suggests children and other family members of seniors don't just consider the cost of the services but what they are actually getting for that cost.

"You can't put a dollar value on peace of mind. You can't put a dollar value on taking a break from caregiving. Anything we can do to help you also helps your loved one," Blom says. "Go with a company you feel comfortable with and who you trust will help you problem solve when issues arise, because they always do! And go with people who are not in this business for the opportunity to make money only, but who have servant hearts and care about the people they serve."

Additionally, Blom says some things to consider include the difference between contracted employees and W-2 employees, what happens if a caregiver is ill or on vacation, how caregivers are screened, where or not it is the same caregiver all the time, what training they receive, if there is a contract tying the family to the agency for any length of time, a minimum number of hours required, if there are any intake or set-up fees, how soon they can start getting care, and if they feel comfortable with the relationship they've built with the company they've chosen to receive care from.

Having experience working—and living—with seniors, Blom strives to provide services to make the later stages of life easier and more comfortable for everyone.

For more information about Right at Home, visit www.rightathome.net. ∎

OUR RIDES | BY RANDY STERN | PHOTOS BY RANDY STERN

Getting Your Vehicle Ready for Winter

Is your vehicle ready for winter?

When the temperature drops and road conditions change, you are put to the test. Your nerves should be of steel as ice and snow hit the highways across the Upper Midwest. Your vehicle should be able to handle this kind of weather change with ease, right?

Not exactly. Like you, your vehicle should be ready for what the season will throw at you.

This is one "Winter What to Do" that really has to be done sooner than later.

We had the chance to talk to Daniel Gravely, the Service Manager at EuroTech in New Brighton, Minnesota, to see about preparing your vehicle for winter. Here is a rundown of what you have to look for to get it winter-ready.

CHECKING YOUR BATTERY: "One of the first things that Minnesotans are very well-versed in knowing (is) what it's like to go out to your car and it not starting in the morning," said Gravely. By checking the battery, you can see whether it will hold a charge. Importantly, it is also smart to check the cables to see if they are in good condition—that also includes the terminal connections.

As for engine block heaters, Gravely stated that "it's not something that comes on a lot of cars anymore even from the manufacturer. It's almost a thing of the past, but we do see them here a lot. They are helpful to most individuals. Nowadays it's less common to have access to a plug-in for them because there's a lot of street parking and whatnot." If you feel that it is needed for your vehicle, you can ask your mechanic to have one installed or get one, or get one from an auto parts store.

CHECKING YOUR BELTS AND HOSES: "One of the things we like to check for is of course just checking over the engine compartment and checking out your belts making sure that there's adequate tension and that there's not excessive wear on them or that they're not cracked," said Gravely.

GET YOUR OIL CHANGED: "A fresh oil change is definitely helpful getting ready for winter, making sure the proper weight of oil is in the vehicle to withstand the cold temperatures," said Gravely. It is always suggested to go with what the manufacturer recommends for specific oil based on your engine requirements.

CHECK YOUR COOLING SYSTEM: "When we're checking over your cooling system," said Gravely, "(Look for) any signs of weak radiator hoses, making sure your coolant is topped off so you get the proper amount of heat in the vehicle, and then just looking and making sure there's no leaks or any type of residue that we can see from a prior leak so that you're sealed up properly for the winter."

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CHECK YOUR BRAKES: Gravely explains, "Brakes are very important going into our icy season. Both snow and ice greatly affect our drivability. Checking out brakes, making sure that we have adequate pad left and that they're in good shape, good working condition, along with our brake fluid. What we want to look for in that is making sure that the brake fluid is clean and is topped off to the proper level."

CHECK YOUR TIRES – OR, CONSIDER A SET OF WINTER TIRES: "What we're looking for with tires is making sure that there's adequate tread depth," Gravely explains. If you notice the wear bars, it is time to change tires. In fact, a safe amount of tire tread should be more than about an eighth of an inch. "The more tread we have the better we're off for the winter," said Gravely.

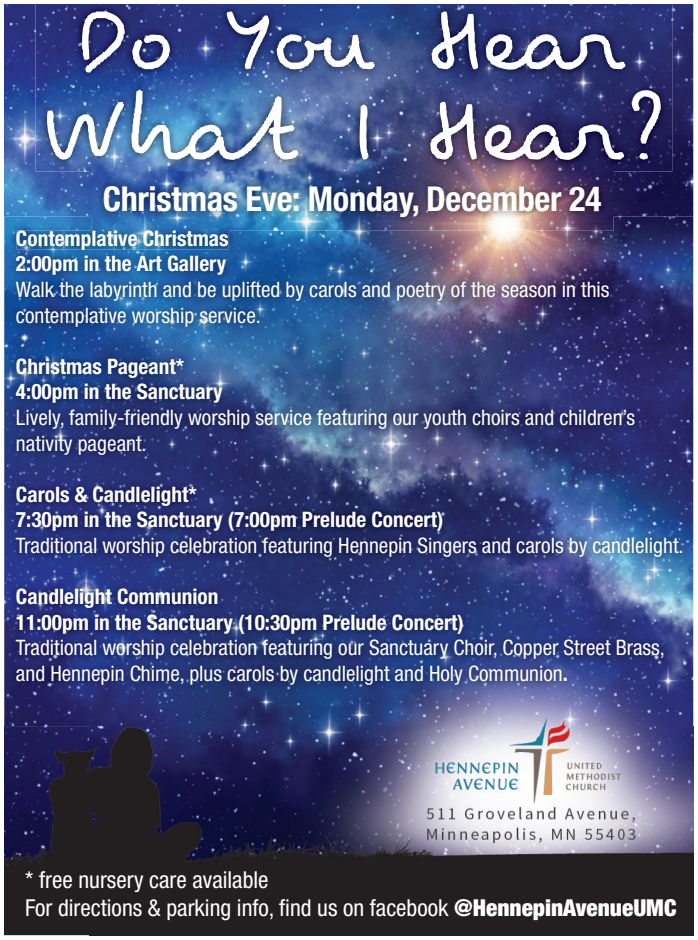
In regards to winter tires, Gravely explains that "they do have just a much greater grip to the road, but ultimately that's not within everybody's price point or budget to have a separate set of wheels, or maybe they don't have [the] opportunity to store them." Gravely recommends at least "[a] great all-season tire or a newer all-season tire will be adequate in our weather and our climate."

MAKE SURE YOUR DEFROSTERS, WIPERS, WINDSHIELD WASHER, AND HEATER WORKS: Gravely recommends to make sure that your defrosters are "working and the windshield wipers are in good shape and that the fluid or the windshield washer is working." All of these will be critical during the winter months to make sure that the windshield is clear for proper vision outward. The rear defroster, as well.

These tips may seem like common sense, but they are really essential for keeping your vehicle running during the winter. It does not matter whether you have a sedan, an SUV, or a pickup truck: all vehicles will need to get these checked and serviced before tackling the snow, sleet, slush, and ice out on the roads—and on your driveway.

You can perform these functions yourself. If you do, make sure you get the right part numbers and information from your vehicle before doing anything to it. Otherwise, take it to a local mechanic or dealership. You may find some deals on a winter check-up that can save you some money.

Don't forget this "winter what-to-do" before you do anything this winter! ∎



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